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CHINA-PAK MILITARY AXIS DEEPENS AS PAK NAVY GETS HANGOR-CLASS SUB

The Pakistan Navy on Thursday commissioned its first Chinese-built submarine with state-of-the-art weapons and advanced sensors, in Sanya, China

EQUIPPED WITH AIR-INDEPENDENT PROPULSION

Pak President Asif Ali Zardari, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf and senior officials from the Pakistan Navy and China's People's Liberation Army were present on the occasion. Built on China's Type 039A design, the vessel is the lead unit of an eight-submarine programme. It is equipped with air-independent propulsion (AIP) and advanced sensors

AIP ON INDIAN SUBS TO BE READY BY YEAR-END

- AIP allows subs to remain underwater for extended periods without surfacing for atmospheric oxygen, enhancing the stealth feature
- The AIP feature gives Pakistan an edge as currently, India doesn't have AIP in any of its submarines. DRDO's indigenous fuel-cell based AIP system is expected to be ready for integration later this year | P11

80%

OF PAKISTAN'S ARMS IMPORTS ARE FROM CHINA, ACCORDING TO SIPRI

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Fast track nod for China FDI in seven sectors

Priority to manufacturing in critical sectors like rare earths, polysilicon and ingot wafer

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

THE government has identified seven critical sectors/manufacturing activities for faster approval of investments from China, a senior official told this newspaper.

These are capital goods, electronic capital goods, electronic components, polysilicon and ingot wafer, advanced battery components, rare earth permanent magnets, and rare earth processing.

Capital goods include plant machinery, heavy equipment or accessories required for manufacturing. Electronic capital goods mean equipment and machinery used for manufacturing lithium-ion battery, mobile phones etc. Electronic components include display module, camera module, printed circuit board, enclosures for mobile phones, etc. Polysilicon is the primary raw material used to produce silicon wafers. This is melted in a crucible to produce an ingot, which is a solid cylindrical or block-shaped mass of crystalline silicon.

More sectors could be added to this list, a document reviewed by this daily showed.

Under the amended Press Note 3 (PN3) framework, the Cabinet has introduced an expedited approval mechanism to clear investment proposals from countries sharing a land border with India (land-bordering countries or LBCs) in specified manufacturing sectors within 60 days. These are referred to as LBC investments. In March this year, the government eased restrictions on investments from neighbouring countries, including China, to encourage inflows into critical sectors.

The restrictions were originally introduced in 2020, at the peak of tensions between India and China.

600 proposals await govt approval

After India put FDI curbs through Press Note 3 in April 2020, investments from China dropped. According to DPIIT, nearly 600 investment proposals from China are awaiting approval. The amended PN3 is expected to clear the backlog and open up the investment flow into India

Investments to be cleared with caution

Officials said while India is open to investments from all countries, including China, it will proceed with caution. "We are keeping our eyes wide open. Safety and security are paramount. The government is willing to facilitate investments, but only with due diligence," said an official

Amend abortion law on rape, says SC

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Thursday refused to hear a curative plea by AIIMS, Delhi regarding the medical termination of a 15-year-old rape survivor, as it asked the government to consider amending the law to permit rape survivors to terminate unwanted pregnancies even beyond 20 weeks.

"Unwanted pregnancy cannot be thrust on a person. Imagine, she is a child. She should be studying now. But we want to make her a mother. This is a case of child rape. Victim will have lifelong scar and trauma. It is now a fight between foetus vs child. Minor child cannot be forced to bear a pregnancy,.. Law needs to be organic and in sync with evolving times," said a bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi.

The court asked Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for AIIMS, to speak to the parents of the victim and left it for them to decide whether or not to end the pregnancy.

The AIIMS had argued that since it's been 30-weeks of pregnancy, the foetus is now a viable life and termination would not be successful. "The child would be born with serious deformities, organ failures and even the minor victim would face lifelong issues, such as not even being able to go through another pregnancy," Bhati said.

Contempt notice

The SC issued notice on a contempt petition alleging non-compliance by AIIMS of its order permitting medical termination of the minor's pregnancy. It directed health ministry principal secy, health dept secy and AIIMS director to appear via video conference on May 4

But the CJI contended that "In cases of child rape, the choice to bear or terminate pregnancy should always be with the victim." He also urged the media to be extra sensitive while reporting this case.

The court exercised its extraordinary powers under Article 142 to override statutory time limits, and directed that the minor and her parents be provided comprehensive psychiatric and medical counselling to take the final call.

Another bench had on April 24 allowed the minor to terminate her pregnancy.

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WITH THIS ISSUE

CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE
INDULGE

42 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Just 17% engineering grads in Karnataka employable: Report

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

ONLY 17 % of engineering graduates in Karnataka are getting employed, representing a staggering employability crisis, revealed a report submitted by the reforms committee on Karnataka Engineering Education Transformation.

The committee, set up by the higher education department and headed by Prof Sadagopan and other IIIT and IISc professors, made a detailed study on engineering education in Karnataka and suggested some major reforms. It submitted this detailed report to the higher education department recently.

The report mentioned some of the important reasons including mass unemployment among computer science graduates due to lack of employment opportunities, sharp decline in admissions to core or basic engineering branches (mechanical, civil and electrical), state engineering colleges that were once famous nationally and internationally seeing a decline in terms of quality, core branches ignoring cross domain reality and lack of competency among students, among other reasons. **CONTINUED ON: P4**

Cabinet approves ₹18Kcr township in Bidadi

Land owners will have the option of taking cash compensation or 9,693 sqft of developed residential plot against 1 acre

HK Patil, Law Minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

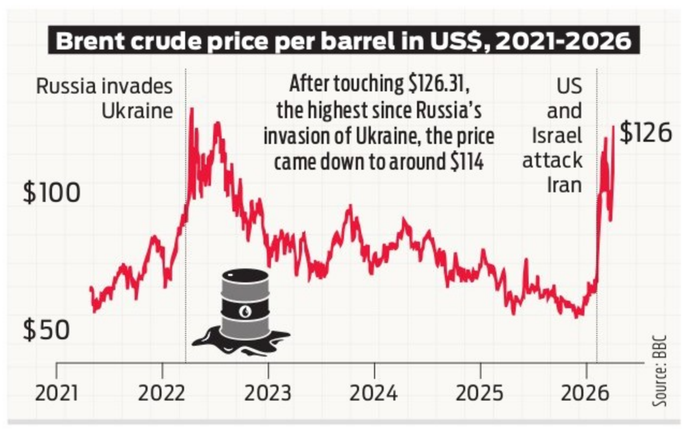
THE Karnataka cabinet on Thursday approved implementation of the Greater Bengaluru Integrated Township Project (GBIT) over an area of about 7,481 acres and 21.08 guntas over nine villages in Bidadi hobli of Ramanagara taluk, in Bengaluru South district. The project is estimated to cost Rs 18,133crore.

The Finance department approved a bank guarantee against Rs 7,500crore to Greater Bengaluru Development Authority which is tasked with implementing the project, aimed at creating a sustainable 'work-live-play' environment acting as a second central business district (CBD) to reduce the strain on inner Bengaluru. Touted as DCM DK Shivakumar's pet project, it faced hiccups with Union minister HD Kumaraswamy opposing it, and a group of farmers holding protests.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah leaves Vidhana Soudha after the Cabinet meeting on Thursday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Briefing the press, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil informed that land owners will have the option of taking cash compensation or 9,693 sqft of developed residential plot against 1 acre. **P4**

Brent crude hits $126 as Don reviews war plan



AGENCIES @ Tehran / Washington

FRESH provocative statements from Iran and fears of renewed attack by the US caused oil prices to fluctuate on Thursday and surge toward their highest levels since the war with Iran began on February 28. Oil prices struck a four-year high on Thursday, with international benchmark Brent crude soaring over 7% to $126 a barrel, before easing in afternoon trading.

In a show of defiance against the US threats, Iran's supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei on Thursday said Tehran will now call the shots, claiming it has an upper hand in the crisis. In a written message broadcast through the state television, Khamenei said Iran would respond with "long and painful strikes" on US positions if Washington renewed attacks.

"We have already seen the fate of your bases in the region; we will also see your warships face the same," he added. He also reasserted Iran's control over the Strait of Hormuz, complicating US plans for a coalition to reopen the waterway.

According to news site Axios, Trump is expected to receive a briefing on new plans for potential military action in Iran from Admiral Brad Cooper, the head of US Central Command. Dropping hints that resumption of attacks against Iran was likely, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz warned that it was "possible that we may soon have to act again" against Iran to achieve the objectives. **P14**

Haj fare up by $100 due to aviation fuel cost hike

PARVEZ SULTAN @ New Delhi

AMID strong opposition to a hefty airfare hike for Haj pilgrims following the spike in Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices, the Centre on Thursday said it had scaled the fare down to an additional ₹10,000 per individual.

Union minister of minority affairs Kiren Rijiju said though airlines had sought $300-400 more per pilgrim, the government negotiated and settled it at $100.

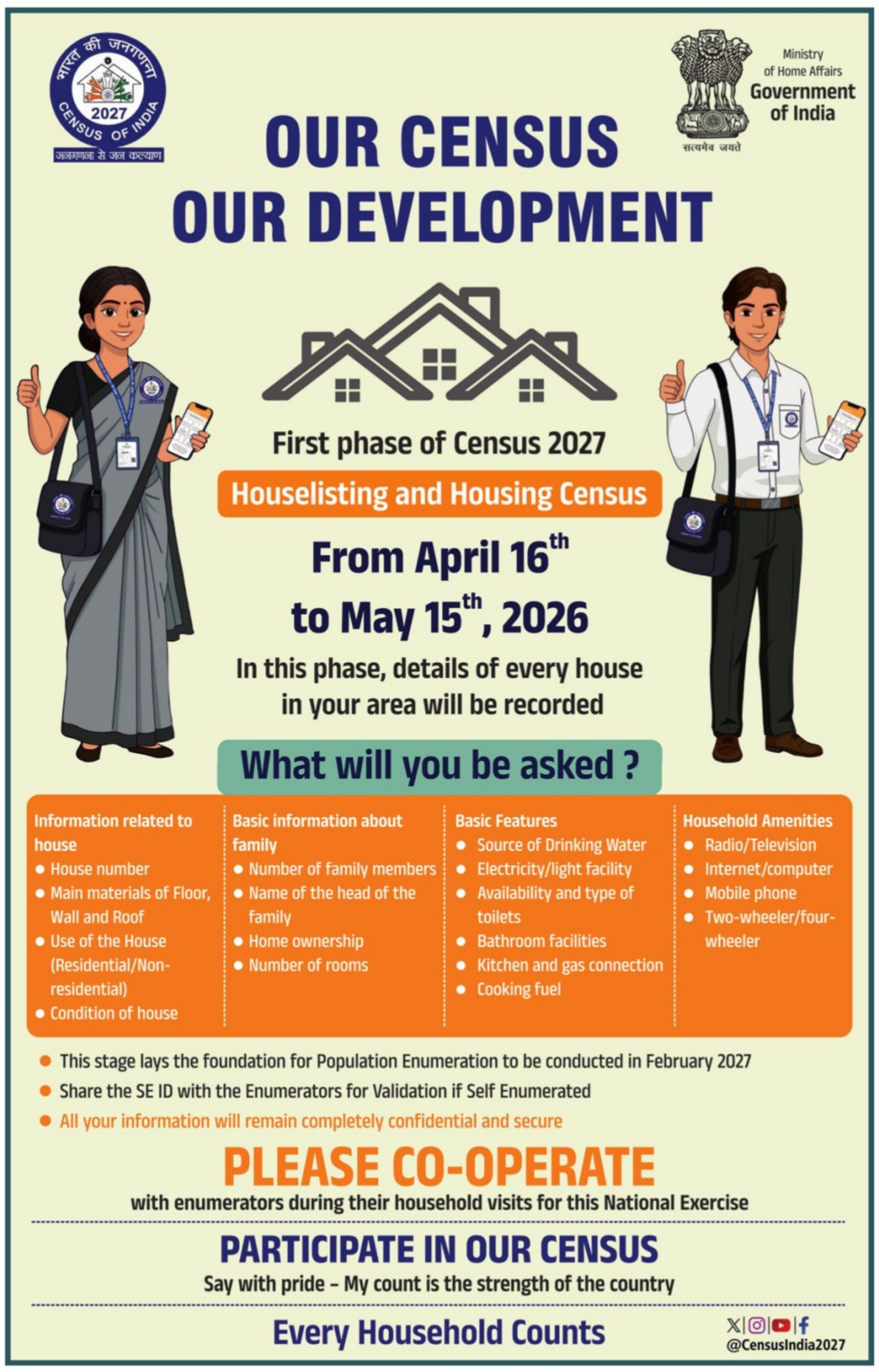
The decision was taken transparently, in good faith, to ensure no disruption in the Haj operations this year, he added.

The proposed hike had drawn criticism from various quarters, including opposition leaders, who termed the increase as injustice to the community.

DAY 62 | WAR WATCH

But the ministry said that it remains committed to making Haj accessible and affordable. "This is not exploitation. This is the government absorbing pressure and protecting pilgrims from a far larger burden. The circular is transparent, the process was lawful, and the decision was made in good faith to ensure Haj 2026 operations are not disrupted for over a lakh pilgrims already registered. Notably, private tour operators had already revised fares sharply and subsequently imposed a further increase of around $150," the ministry stated.

Demanding revocation of the circular, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi said, "Are pilgrims being punished for going through the Haj Committee?"


भारत की जनगणना
2027
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जनगणना से जन कल्याण
Ministry of Home Affairs
Government of India
सत्यमेव जयते
OUR CENSUS
OUR DEVELOPMENT
First phase of Census 2027
Houselisting and Housing Census
From April 16th to May 15th, 2026
In this phase, details of every house in your area will be recorded
What will you be asked ?
Information related to house
House number
Main materials of Floor, Wall and Roof
Use of the House (Residential/Non-residential)
Condition of house
Basic information about family
Number of family members
Name of the head of the family
Home ownership
Number of rooms
Basic Features
Source of Drinking Water
Electricity/light facility
Availability and type of toilets
Bathroom facilities
Kitchen and gas connection
Cooking fuel
Household Amenities
Radio/Television
Internet/computer
Mobile phone
Two-wheeler/four-wheeler
This stage lays the foundation for Population Enumeration to be conducted in February 2027
Share the SE ID with the Enumerators for Validation if Self Enumerated
All your information will remain completely confidential and secure
PLEASE CO-OPERATE
with enumerators during their household visits for this National Exercise
PARTICIPATE IN OUR CENSUS
Say with pride – My count is the strength of the country
Every Household Counts
@CensusIndia2027

EXPRESS READ

GBA extends 5% rebate on property tax till May 31

Bengaluru: The GBA has extended the 5% rebate on property tax for 2026-27 up to May 31. The payment must be made in a single installment either online via the property tax portal or at designated city corporation tax payment centres.

Safety audit of all govt hosp buildings, compound walls

Bengaluru: A day after seven people died in the compound wall collapse at Bowring Hospital, Medical Education Minister Dr Sharanprakash R Patil ordered a safety audit of all government hospital buildings and compound walls | **P2**

Confusion over CM post will be cleared soon, says Kharge

Kalaburagi: The Congress high command will soon clear confusion on the leadership issue, or give Chief Minister Siddaramaiah the green signal for a cabinet reshuffle, AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge said on Thursday | **P4**